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LARRY CRAIG

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NEWS RELEASE

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Dan Whiting (202) 224-8078
Sid Smith (208) 342-7985

Climate Change Battle Cry: Bali or Bust!?
by Senator Larry Craig

Al Gore's latest effort to protect the planet from mankind just goes to show that, as in the movies, sequels rarely live up to the hype. The newest stage for the world's most popular former vice-president will be the tiny resort island of Bali, where next week he will assemble a cast of thousands. As it has done for the past dozen years, the United Nations' Conference of the Parties ("COP") will feature a plot line that could be titled "The UN Knows Best".

Meanwhile, after a year of posturing over energy and climate legislation, Democrats in Congress have decided it is finally time to get serious about passing something – at this point anything would do.

On energy, the House appears to be close to agreement on two provisions I sponsored with Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-SD) in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Increasing both auto mileage standards and cleaner fuels from cellulosic biomass were the cornerstones of the Dorgan-Craig SAFE Energy Act that were included in the Senate passed energy bill this past summer. These provisions will reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and they'll also reduce greenhouse gas emissions – a true "win-win" for our security and the environment.

In the Environment and Public Works Committee, Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-CA) hopes to strike a symbolic victory for Europeans everywhere by merely passing a bill out of committee to leave the impression that the United States is ready to follow Europe's lead on climate change. In addition to raising energy costs further, her bill would export what's left of our manufacturing jobs, all for a negligible and debatable impact on global temperatures. Fortunately, her all-pain, no-gain strategy has no chance of actually becoming law, but it'll sure make for a scenic press conference in Bali.

Senator Boxer's goal of waving a symbolic, yet meaningless, committee-passed bill in Bali will demonstrate nothing more than her intent to revert the United States to a developing country. I, of course, plan to vote against the bill in committee, and many of us on the committee will do our best to discuss the real need to balance clean energy with our energy security. But for at least another year the Democrats control the politicking on these issues, even if they aren't likely to have any of it signed into law.

I've been to three of the last six "COP" conferences, so I'd expect the COP-13 crowd will be singing a familiar tune. Sen. Boxer will be welcomed as the liberator, and Al Gore will probably receive

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another award, but in the end, the only impact the conference will have will be the pollution and consumption they all create in traveling to Bali in the first place.

Reducing emissions need not be so painful. The United States has reduced the intensity of our emissions steadily during the last 7 years. We do it by using cleaner energy, not less energy, while growing our economy. Energy from hydropower, cellulosic ethanol, biodiesel, geothermal, solar, and wind – the same choices Idaho has already made – this is why Idaho continues to simultaneously lead the country in fewest greenhouse gasses emitted and lowest power rates paid.

As nuclear power also becomes a more viable option for growing states like Idaho, we can avoid suffering for symbolism, and continue to keep things cool in our own backyard, even if there's nothing but hot air in Bali.